

# **Report**

**On the**

**Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP)  
Workshop for Members of Parliament by the Civil  
Society for Poverty Reduction (CSPR) held at the  
National Assembly Ampu Theatre on Monday 3<sup>rd</sup>  
March 2003**

**Prepared by the  
CSPR Secretariat- March 2003**

## **TABLE OF CONTENTS**

<b>Content</b>	<b>Page</b>
<b>(i) Table of Contents</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>1. Introduction</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>2. Opening</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>3. Presentations</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>4. Discussions</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>5. Closing</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>6. Appendix – Presentations</b>	<b>10</b>

## **1. INTRODUCTION**

The Zambian Government, in consultation with the Civil Society, in 2001 successfully prepared the country's first Poverty Reduction Strategic Paper (PRSP), which is to serve as a development framework within which most of the government's plans and programmes for poverty reduction are to be guided.

Since the formulation of the PRSP close to a year ago, Civil Society through the Civil Society for Poverty Reduction (CSPR) has been in constant touch with the PRSP process from the implementation, content and monitoring issues. It has been making its comments, critiques, contributions and analyses to ensure the smooth running and implementation of the PRSP by not only the government alone but from all stake holders involved and concerned.

On Monday 3<sup>rd</sup> March 2003, the CSPR in cooperation with the Ministry of Finance, planning and Economic Development (MoFED) organized and hosted a workshop for Members of Parliament (MPs) on the PRSP. The overall objective of this workshop was to among many other things, sensitise MPs on the PRSP issues stemming from the origin, process, content and implementation aspects surrounding the document.

Resource persons were therefore invited from the Government, Multilateral and Bilateral Agencies and the Civil Society.

## **2. OPENING**

Dr Bwalya Ng'andu, the Economics Association of Zambia (EAZ) Secretary, moderated the Workshop; he started off by welcoming every one who had come including the civil society guests who were invited to attend the workshop. Dr Ngandu introduced the speakers on the panel, which included the UN Resident Coordinator and Resident Representative of the UNDP Ms Olubanke King-Akelere, Prof. V Seshamani from the University of Zambia, Mr. Lukwesa Kaemba the Assistant Director planning in the Ministry of Finance, Ms Chilufya Kasutu from the Civil Society and Mr. Richard Montgomery from DFID.

## **3. PRESENTATIONS**

### **Miss Olubanke King- Akelere: UN and UNDP Resident Coordinator**

Ms King-Akelere gave the opening remarks and in starting her presentation she said that this was the second workshop on the PRSP that the UNDP is involving itself in, the first being one organized for Cabinet Ministers, Provincial Deputy Ministers and Chairpersons of selected committees of parliament in June 2002 gave an insight into the UN's involvement in the PRSP process in Zambia. Ms

King-Akelere gave an insight into the UN's involvement in the PRSP process in Zambia.

- Ms King- Akelere further talked about the relationship of the PRSP and the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) as promulgated by the United Nations, she said that the PRSP was a way of meeting the MDGs and looking at what is happening to the MDGs over a time frame can closely monitor the success of the PRSP.
- Ms Akelere also highlighted the role of the UN in PRSPs and these are summarized in form of the following principles that underscores UN support;
  1. Build and support national capacity
  2. Active mobilization of political will and resources
  3. Target poverty in a multidimensional approach
  4. Linking with ongoing initiatives

Ms Akelere's presentation also dwelt on the current and future support that the UN system gives and will continue to give in Zambia. Ms Akelere further narrowed down specifically to the UNDP's support to the overall process.

Among the more specific support that UNDP has provided funds to are:

- The Consultative Process
- Capacity Building
- Data Collection
- Working Groups Activities
- Sharing of experiences from other countries
- Launch of the PRSP Document
- Support to Civil Society

The UNDP representative further stated future support in the areas of PRSP Implementation.

### **Prof. V Seshamani: University of Zambia**

The second presentation was made by Prof. V Seshamani who gave a Civil Society perspective of the Genesis, Process and Content of the PRSP in Zambia.

Prof. Seshamani opened his presentation by giving a historical view and evolution of some of the development plans and initiatives undertaken by the governments in the past two decades. The National Poverty Reduction Strategic Framework and National Poverty Reduction Action Plan were the two documents

formulated by the government of Zambia to deal with the 1995 poverty levels of 73% with the aim of reducing this figure to 50% by the year 2004.

However, during this period the IMF converted its Enhanced Structural Adjustment Facility (ESAF) to the Poverty Reduction Growth Facility (PRGF) and under this new frame work of Assistance the PRSP became a requirement for countries to access the new concessional facilities including debt relief.

### **Content**

Prof. Seshamani's presentation spelt out the three main themes of Zambia's PRSP;

- The Economic themes
- Social theme and the
- Cross Cutting theme

Prof. Seshamani brought out some areas where the PRSP could be improved. He stated that it is not clear on how the very measure under the PRSP will be implemented to ensure a Poverty Focus. He stated that some areas like the issue of land are not adequately dealt with, there seems to be no guarantee that basic education will benefit the poor and he also noted that there is very little provision for social safety nets.

### **Process**

In terms of the process of the PRSP, Prof. Seshamani noted that Zambia has proved to be one of the countries where the participation of the Civil Society in the PRSP has been exemplary. He however noted that there is scope for improvement. Civil Society needs to have better access to vital documents and information from the government and there is also need to eliminate the mutual suspicions that still abound.

The Professor further stated that it is important that Zambia puts in place the Medium Term Expenditure Framework (MTEF) and the Integrated Financial Management and Information System (IFMIS) to ensure that financial controlling Officers do not commit resources to expenditures outside the PRSP Objectives.

He further stated in the presentation that there is need for adequate capacity building within the government ministries not only the MoFED, but others like the Ministry of Community Development and Social Services, Education and Health. In the same vein the professor noted capacity limitations on the part of the Civil Society, he observed that the CSPR Secretariat is overwhelmed with logistical issues as opposed to other policy and analytical work.

There is need to strengthen local capacity for research and policy analysis in support of formulation of appropriate interventions and policies for reducing poverty.

## **Mr. Lukwesa Kaemba: Director – Planning and Economic Management Department (PEMD)**

Mr. Kaemba the Director at the Ministry of Finance (PEMD) gave the presentation on the government's role in the implementation and monitoring of the PRSP. Mr. Kaemba's presentation outlined two road areas of the PRSP, the Implementation and the institutional arrangements on one hand and the monitoring issues on the other.

### **Implementation and Institutional arrangements**

Mr. Kaemba pointed the various units in the government structure that are involved at different levels in the implementation of the PRSP. He said that while the overall responsibility rested with the MoFED there are other lower level units that are part of the implementation structure of the PRSP, such as:

- Provincial Planning Units
- District Planning Units

He further stated that the MFNP through the PEMD will scrutinize all budget submissions from the line ministries to ensure that they are consistent with the objectives of the PRSP.

### **Monitoring**

Mr. Kaemba also said that in order to ensure that the implementation of the PRSP is on course and desired results are achieved monitoring mechanisms have been put in place. These will involve the tracking of key indicators over time and space with a view to seeing what changes have taken place to the indicators following the implementation of the PRSP.

Mr. Kaemba said that the monitoring would be based on indicators that were selected by the PRSP thematic working groups for the different sectors at the national summit for Poverty Reduction.

## **Mrs. Chilufya Kasutu; Civil Society**

Mrs. Chilufya Kasutu gave a presentation on behalf of the Civil Society and her presentation addressed the expectations of the Civil Society and the role of the MPs in meeting these expectations.

### **Civil Society Expectations**

Mrs. Kasutu said that the foremost civil society expectation was meaningful participation in the entire process from the formulation of the priority issues, implementation and monitoring of the PRSP.

Mrs. Kasutu observed that in the past there had been lack of wider civil society consultation and participation in such national development agenda at higher decision making levels like technical committees, hence this time around the CSO were adamant on being involved in the process.

Mrs. Kasutu also pointed out the future expectations of the Civil Society as follows;

- Government allocate the necessary resources towards poverty alleviation
- The budget making process be fully opened up for greater stake holder participation
- There will be transparency on the HIPC funds in terms of amount received and priority areas to which they have been committed and stronger measure for dealing with mismanagement and misappropriation is implemented.
- Provincial and district committees will be established to monitor the PRSP at local levels including HIPC tracking and budget monitoring.

### **The Role of MPs**

Mrs. Kasutu went ahead and pointed out the role of MPs in the PRSP process. She said that an opportunity had been lost in not involving the MPs in the design and scope of the PRSP. She however emphasized that opportunity still existed to ensure that parliament played its role in ensuring the success of the PRSP.

She said there has been and continues to exist the greater need for not only partnerships between the Civil Society and Parliament but also between Civil Society and government.

She pointed out that parliamentarians, as the legitimate representatives of the people, should be involved in designing and implementation of national strategies and secondly because policy implementation is such a political issue, it is essential that they be involved if reforms are ever actually going to happen.

Mrs. Kasutu further highlighted the importance of parliament in the PRSP process as follows;

In a multi party environment MPs should enhance political accountability and legitimacy and lessen the culture of rubber stamping and approving measures not discussed and not fully understood.

She further stated that parliament should provide a forum for building multi-party consensus on poverty reduction priorities and help sustain the participatory process that underpins the PRSP.

Mrs. Kasutu concluded her paper by highlighting some of the things that MPs would be expected to do with regards to the PRSP. Some of these being;

- Raising awareness through information dissemination and developing public demand for effective implementation of the PRSP
- Ensure consistency of PRSP with legislation and budgets
- Provide consistent perspectives
- Effective audits as key contributions to the monitoring of the poverty reduction expenditures
- Reviews of annual progress reports
- Institutionalize participation
- Demand political leverage, the question of poverty reduction should transcend political expediency

### **Richard Montgomery - UK Department for International Development (DFID)**

Mr. Montgomery presented views on the role of bilaterals on behalf of DFID; Mr. Montgomery's presentation was divided into four broad areas covering,

1. General Remarks on the PRSP and the Role of Bilaterals
2. The Past and future roles of the bilateral donors
3. The PRSP as the basis for more coordination of Bilaterals
4. Building blocks for achieving more bilateral support to the PRSP

#### **General remarks on the PRSP and the role of Bilaterals**

Mr. Montgomery said that DFID's global policy is to redirect our support in all countries in line with national PRSPs. This would mean DFID stopping some initiatives and redirecting attention to higher priorities set out in the PRSP.

Mr. Montgomery however noted that the country's PRSP was very broad as it covers a huge number of sectors and issues, hence it does not make it easy for bilaterals to decide which areas to commit their resources.

#### **The past and future roles of the bilateral donors**

DFID has a policy of promoting more coordination of policy and procedure (harmonization). He pointed out that in the past like most Bilaterals DFID has

provided assistance by granting funding for individual projects. While there are pluses with this approach, it distorts government's spending .

Mr. Montgomery said in future with the harmonization of bilateral Aid, donors will be pooling funds for projects in a single fund at the disposal of the ministries. This will reduce the transaction costs for line ministries.

#### **The PRSP as the basis for more coordination of Bilaterals**

Mr. Montgomery noted that the PRSP provided a channel through which donors can coordinate their funding. He said DFID's policy is to consider not just individual projects and sector budgets but the overall government budgets.

He said such budget support would enable and provide greater flexibility and predictability of funding for governments to manage finance for PRSP policies and programmes.

#### **Building blocks for achieving more bilateral support to the PRSP**

Mr. Montgomery stated in his last part of the presentation that there are key building blocks needed in Zambia if the government is to harness bilateral and other donor contributions in a similar coordinated effort.

In summary form the building blocks include;

- More effective donor-government dialogue, in order to develop a common vision with the donor community.
- More confidence in public expenditure management, financial accountability and transparency of resource use.
- A stronger national debate about poverty reduction and specifically more emphasis on monitoring of PRSP implementation and poverty.

In conclusion, Mr. Montgomery stated that it is important that the MFNP completes the development of a framework of priority action to build confidence of the donors that the PRSP is being implemented.

## **4. DISCUSSIONS**

The moderator invited the Honorable MPs to ask questions and make contributions towards the presentations.

**Hon. Bob Sichinga** MP for Kafue wanted to find out to what extent the Third National Development Plan (TNDP) was in sync with the PRSP and the budget as earlier stated by Mr. Lukwesa Kaemba. Hon Sichinga pointed out that there

was no synchronization among the three documents, the TNDP, the PRSP and the 2003 Budget as they cover different time periods.

In response to Hon Sichinga's question Mr. Kaemba said that the PRSP document is a rolling document in which each program and targets are reviewed. He further stated that while the TNDP and the PRSP reflect broad goals and programs, the annual National Budget is a specific way of implementing these programs hence there is a relationship among these three documents.

**Hon. Sibetta** (MP Luena South) and **Hon. George Phiri** (MP for Vubwi) expressed their lack of confidence in the PRSP process and other such government led processes saying they are just ways in which government in collusion with donors eat money under the pretext of helping the poor. They said for a long time now, there have been many such programs formulated to try and help the poor but there have been no improvements in the living conditions of the poor.

**Hon. Inonge Wina** (MP Nalolo) expressed her concerned and wondered if the whole process was not a risky undertaking as there was too much reliance on donor support for the success of the PRSP. She also wondered why government had been silent on whether or not it had reached the HIPC completion point as expected by donors. She also said that there was need for an enabling environment even for the local people, with such things as roads and other infrastructure necessary for development.

Hon. John Chibanga MP Chama North wanted to find out from Prof. Seshamani if it was in order of the PRSP plans for government to deny development to areas of the opposition. However Prof Seshamani stated that it was a political decision which dictated such distribution of resources but said that speaking as an economist and also in his individual capacity it wasn't supposed to be the case.

During the discussions, other Members of Parliament expressed and echoed similar concerns and particularly government's effectiveness in committing itself to implementing the PRSP and other such development plans, the MPs also called upon the Senior Civil Servants to play their role by advising politicians on the right ways of doing things as government leaders rely on them before making decisions.

## **5. CLOSING**

The moderator in closing thanked all the MPs and other invited guests who attended the workshop, he called upon the MPs to take their place and identify their roles in the PRSP process as they are a fundamental aspect of the governance process.

## **6. APPENDIX - Presentations**